

## Message Text

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41

ACTION EA-09

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R 151053Z MAR 76  
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
TO USDOC WASHDC  
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 214  
AMCONSUL HONG KONG  
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: BEXP, TH

SUBJECT: MAJOR PROJECT: BANGKOK AIRPORT STUDY

REF: (A) STATE 052668, (B) BANGKOK 1133

1. ON MARCH 10 EMBOFF VISITED DR. SISUK CHANTHARANGSU, SECRETARY OF THE AIRPORT COMMITTEE, MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS, (AND SON OF DR. SIRILAK, UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS) AND DISCUSSED THE JANUARY 30 INVITATION TO SUBMIT PROPOSALS ON THE STUDY OF THE NEW BANGKOK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT.

2. SISUK SAID THAT THUS FAR ONLY THREE OF THE TEN SHORT-LISTED FIRMS HAD VISITED THE MINISTRY SINCE THE INVITATION LETTER WAS ISSUED. THE THREE WERE AMERICAN - TAMS; BOOZ, ALLEN & HAMILTON; SPEAS HARRIS. HOWEVER, HE EXPECTED THAT ALL TEN (SEVEN ARE U.S.) WOULD SUBMIT PROPOSALS.

3. SISUK THEN PROJECTED THE TIMING OF EVENTS AFTER APRIL 30 WHICH HE ADMITTED WAS OPTIMISTIC BASED ON PAST PERFORMANCE. AFTER RECEIPT OF THE PROPOSALS, HE SAID THE PROJECT WOULD HAVE TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE NEWLY FORMED GOVERNMENT FOR ITS "ROUTINE" APPROVAL WHICH IS NECESSARY ACCORDING TO THAI LAW. THIS WOULD PROBABLY TAKE THREE WEEKS. THEN THE AIRPORT COMMITTEE WOULD NEED TWO MONTHS TO EVALUATE THE PROPOSALS AND SELECTION/NEGOTIA-  
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TIONS WOULD TAKE PLACE IN LATE JULY OR AUGUST. HE HOPED THAT

WORK COULD BEGIN BEFORE THE END OF THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR  
ENDING SEPTEMBER 30, SO THAT SOME MONEY COULD BE DISBURSED.  
OTHERWISE THE BUDGET ALLOCATED FOR THE STUDY WOULD HAVE TO BE  
RETURNED TO THE TREASURY AND REAPPLIED FOR IN THE NEXT FISCAL  
YEAR.

4. ACCORDING TO THE TERMS OF REFERENCE, EACH FOREIGN FIRM  
SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL MUST HAVE A THAI ASSOCIATE. THIS IS A  
PROBLEM AS THERE ARE NO LOCAL FIRMS WITH PRIOR AIRPORT EXPERIENCE  
AND FEW WITH OTHER RELEVANT EXPERIENCE. ALSO, THE TECHNICAL AND  
PRICE PROPOSALS ARE TO BE SUBMITTED SEPARATELY AND SUPPOSEDLY THE  
SELECTION WILL BE MADE ONLY ON THE BASIS OF MERIT. (COMMENT:  
WHILE THIS DETERMINATION IS LAUDABLE, EMBASSY WOULD EXPECT PRICE  
AND OTHER FACTORS TO HAVE SOME INFLUENCE.)

5. ANOTHER REQUIREMENT OF THE STUDY IS THAT TWO OR THREE  
ALTERNATIVE SITES MUST BE PRESENTED AS POTENTIAL LOCATIONS FOR A  
NEW AIRPORT. ALTHOUGH THE NONG NGU HAO (COBRA SWAMP) SITE IS  
NOT MENTIONED BY NAME IN THE TERMS OF REFERENCE. SISUK SAID THAT  
HE WAS TELLING EACH FIRM THAT THIS LOCATION "SHOULD" BE ONE OF THE  
SITES STUDIED. BASED ON A 1963 FAA (U.S.) STUDY OF SIX POSSIBLE  
SITES FOR A NEW BANGKOK AIRPORT, WHICH RECOMMENDED COBRA SWAMP  
(NOT A SWAMP AT ALL BUT A RICE PADDY), THE RTG PURCHASED MUCH OF  
THE LAND. TO BUY LAND ELSEWHERE NOW WOULD BE VERY EXPENSIVE.  
THEREFORE, SISUK STRONGLY HINTED THAT THE RTG FAVORED FINDINGS  
WHICH WOULD SUPPORT USING NONG NGU HAO, SOME 20 KILOMETERS  
SOUTHEAST OF BANGKOK, AS THE BEST SITE.

6. WHEN ASKED ABOUT CONVERTING U-TAPAO AIRBASE TO A COMMERCIAL  
AIRPORT, SISUK CALLED THE MARCH 2ND CABINET PROPOSAL TO DO SO  
"RIDICULOUS". U-TAPAO, ABOUT 175 KILOMETERS SOUTHEAST OF  
BANGKOK, IS TOO FAR TO SERVE BANGKOK BUT MIGHT BE USED FOR  
CHARTERS TO THE NEARBY RESORT OF PATTAYA. HOWEVER, TO DEVELOP  
THE NECESSARY FACILITIES WOULD TAKE TOO LONG AND WOULD BE TOO  
EXPENSIVE TO BE A VIABLE PROJECT. FURTHERMORE, IT WOULD BE  
DIFFICULT TO SEGREGATE THE CIVILIAN FROM THE MILITARY PORTIONS  
OF THE AIRBASE. IN CONCLUSION, SISUK DID NOT GIVE THIS PROJECT  
MUCH OF A CHANCE DESPITE THE CABINET'S PROPOSAL, AND STATED  
THAT THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NO CONNECTION BETWEEN HIS PROJECT AND  
THIS SCHEME.

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WHITEHOUSE

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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